

LAND TRUST NETWORK PROTECTS BLACKHAWK BLUFF



The Land Trust Network of Jefferson County (LTN) recently acquired three donated conservation easements, all located on Blackhawk Bluff in the Town of Koshkonong, Jefferson County. This makes the fourth easement held by the LTN in this immediate area.

In 2007 Linn and Ann Duesterbeck donated a conservation easement on their 64 acre property to the LTN. This donation was comprised of the entire northern portion of Blackhawk Bluff.

The Duesterbecks then constructed a waterfowl habitat on this protected land and for 15 years this habitat has flourished with birds and aquatic life.

Recently the Duesterbeck property was purchased by Mark and Carolyn Meyer. Adding to the bluff's protection, the Meyers placed a conservation easement on the entire southern portion of Blackhawk Bluff (45 acres) and two additional easements.

The two additional properties placed in conservation consist of a one-acre lot located at the very tip of Blackhawk Bluff, and the other located in the small subdivision on the west-side of the bluff. Now over 95% of Blackhawk Bluff is protected from development, in perpetuity through conservation easements held by the Land Trust Network.

The Meyers have also protected over 210 acres of wetlands in Edgerton under an easement program. These properties remain in private ownership and trespassing is not allowed.

Donations of conservation easements can be used as an income tax deduction for the landowner. The tax donation value is equal to the easement value, but per IRS rules, the easement must be donated to a non-profit 501(c)(3) land conservation organization that can legally accept donations of easements.

The Land Trust Network is a private, non-profit land conservation organization that was created in 2004 by a group of local landowners.

According to Martine Koepfel, Certified Public Accountant and Chairwoman of the Land Trust Network, the LTN currently holds 39 donated conservation easements and two parcels of donated land; protecting over 6,000 acres of land throughout Wisconsin.

For information on the land conservation easement programs offered by the LTN please go to www.landtrustnetwork.org.